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Energy Sense: Weatherizing Your Home

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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weatherizing your home



Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University
U.S. Department of Agriculture

weatherizing your home

As home heating costs rise, wise consumers seek ways to maximize each dollar spent for fuel. In 90 percent of American homes, especially those in cooler zones such as the Northeast, it is possible to save 10 to 30 cents of every dollar currently spent for home heating fuel, by reducing air infiltration and making a number of inexpensive repairs and adjustments.

Older homes are especially susceptible to cracks around doors and windows. Masonry exteriors—stone, stucco, and brick—often develop cracks and should be repointed. But old or new, frame or masonry, insulated or not, *all* homes suffer some unnecessary heat loss.

Heat escapes and cold air enters wherever two different materials or parts of a house join and through any opening, however small, between heated

and unheated areas or the exterior of a home. Remedies for these situations—caulking, weather stripping, and sealing—are among the least expensive of energy savers and, in most cases, are do-it-yourself jobs.

Caulking

Be on the lookout for cracks in the following areas and, with a putty knife or caulking gun, thoroughly fill each crack with a good quality caulking compound. On the outside of the home, check:

- Around window and door frames, sills, and joints.
- At corners formed by siding.
- Between porches and main body of home.
- Around water faucets and electrical outlets.
- Where chimney or masonry meets siding.

On the inside of the home, check:

- Between foundation and sill plate.

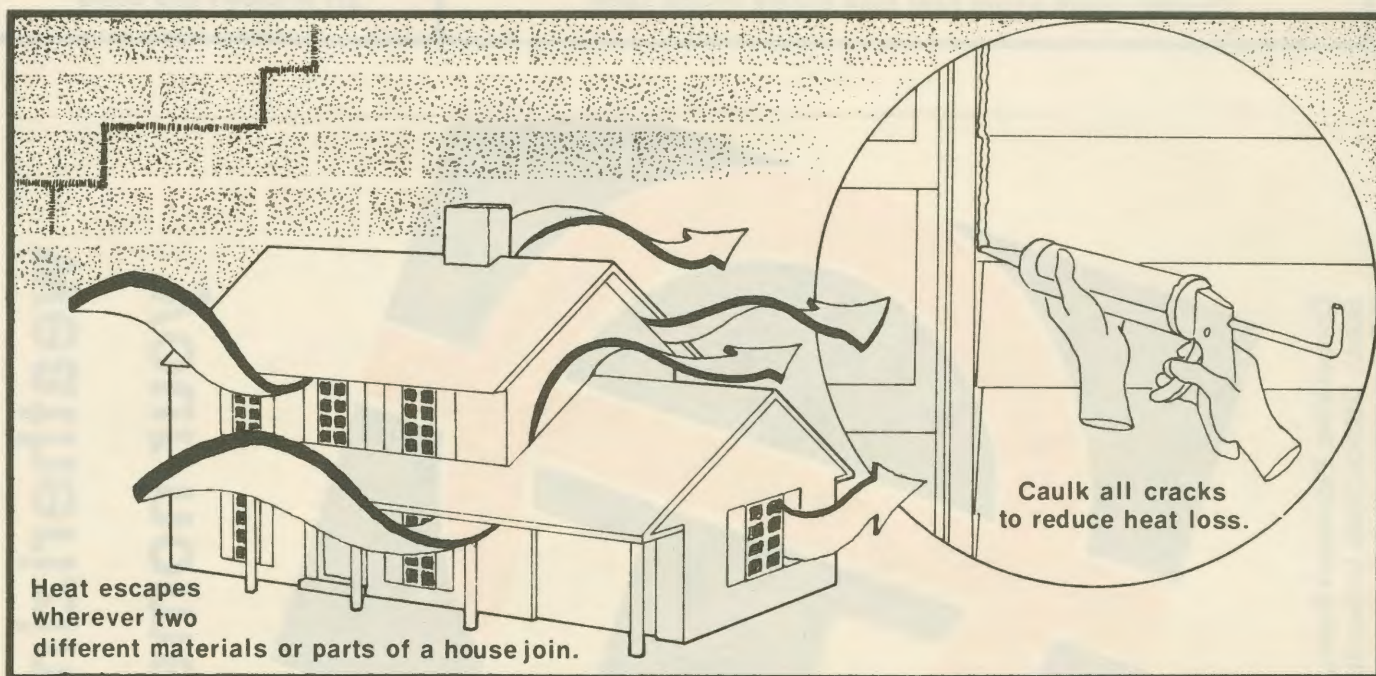
- Around ceiling fixtures.
- Around water pipes and drains.
- Where furnace flue goes through attic.
- Around attic entry.
- Between heated and unheated areas, such as attached garages and crawl spaces.

All cracks should first be cleaned. Deep or wide cracks should be filled with caulking cotton, sponge rubber, or mineral wool before caulking.

Weather Stripping

Windows, doors, and all movable joints in a home should be checked and a durable weatherstripping material added wherever air leaks are found. Be especially watchful in the following areas:

- Around loose fitting window sash and casings.
- Around loose-fitting entrance doors.
- Around doors or any openings between heated and unheated spaces.



Consult a reputable hardware or building materials supplier about the type of caulking compound or weather stripping required for your particular job. Such dealers can also answer questions about proper application and installation.

Additional Ways to Cut Heat Loss

Energy-wise homeowners can reduce heat loss even further:

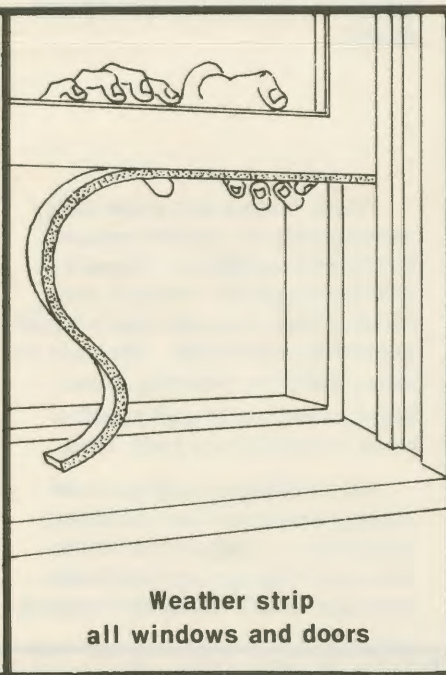
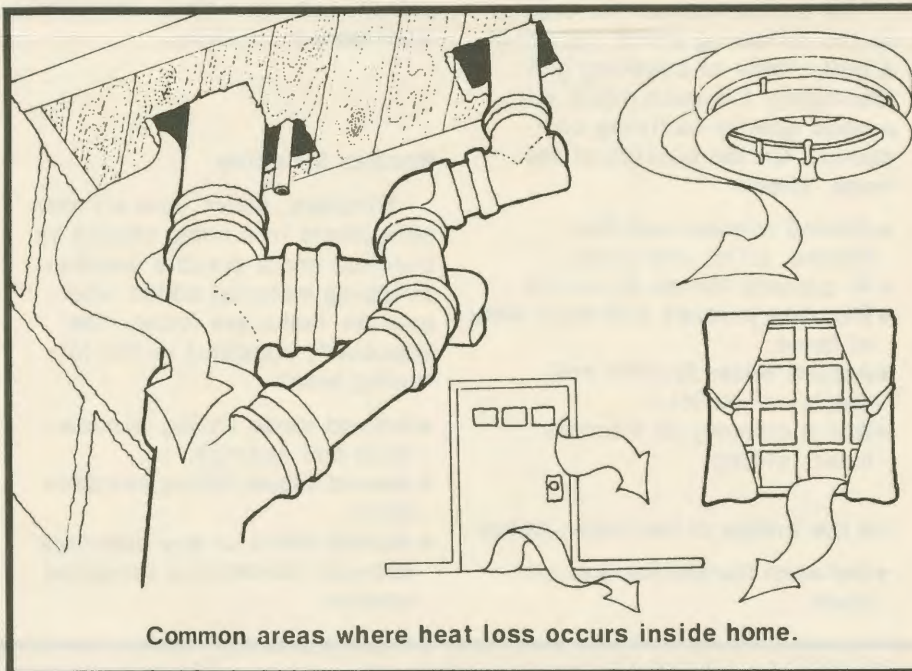
- Close off infrequently used entrances.

- Keep exterior doors tightly closed, as well as doors leading to the attic, basement, and attached garage. And don't open them unnecessarily!
- When the fireplace is not in use, close the damper securely and replace the conventional screen with wood or glass.
- Tape unused keyholes.
- Cap *unused* flues or chimneys.
- Close off unused rooms, especially those on northern or windy sides of the home, and reduce temperature in these areas.

- Close overhead doors of attached garages.
- If zone heating is used, close doors between areas with different thermostat settings, or install doors if there are none.

One in a series of home energy conservation fact sheets. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the USDA. Hollis D. Hall, Director of CES, SDSU, Brookings. Educational programs offered without regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, handicap, or national origin. An Equal Opportunity Employer.

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